

MINUTES
STATEWIDE RAC MEETING
October 21-22, 2004
Riviera Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada

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Attendees

RAC Members

Sierra Front-Northwest Great Basin RAC Members

John E. Dicks
Rochanne Downs
Jim Eidel
John Falen
John Gebhardt
Jerry Hepworth
Patricia Herzog
John Mudge
Ernie Paine
Bill Roullier
Vern Schulze
Sherm Swanson
Larie Trippet
D. Craig Young

Mojave-Southern Great Basin RAC Members

Marta Agee
Colleen Beck
Joni Eastley
Jerry Helton
John Hiatt
Bob Maichle
Steve Mellington
Steve Parker
Claire Toomey
John Weisser
Billie Young

Northeastern Great Basin RAC Members

Sheri Eklund-Brown
Art Gale
Vince Garcia
Dave Gaskin
Brent Howerton
Jon Hutchings
Phyllis Jo Dean
Bill Upton
Hank Vogler

Bureau of Land Management

Kathleen Clarke	BLM Director, Washington DC Office
Bob Abbey	BLM Nevada State Director
Amy Lueders	BLM Nevada Associate State Director
Jo Simpson	Chief, Office of Communications, Nevada State Office
Meg Jensen	DSD, Natural Resources, Lands and Planning, NSO
Everett "Butch" Hayes	Fire Resource Specialist, Office of Fire and Aviation, NSO
Reg Reid	Mineral Law Specialist, Minerals, NSO
Terry Reed	Winnemucca Field Manager
Helen Hankins	Elko Field Manager
Mark Morse	Las Vegas Field Manager
Gene Kolkman	Ely Field Manager
Jerry Smith	Battle Mountain Field Manager
Elayn Briggs	Associate Field Manager, Carson City Field Office
Angie Lara	Associate Field Manager, Las Vegas Field Office
Stephanie Connolly	Associate Field Manager, Ely Field Office
Mark Struble	Public Affairs Specialist, Carson City Field Office
Jamie Thompson	Public Affairs Specialist, Winnemucca Field Office
Mike Brown	Public Affairs Specialist, Elko Field Office
Chris Hanefeld	Public Affairs Specialist, Ely Field Office
Diane Hendry	Public Affairs Specialist, Battle Mountain Field Office
Debra Kolkman	Statewide RAC Coordinator, Nevada State Office
Nancy Thompson	Field Manager's Staff Secretary, Winnemucca Field Office
Karen Eller	Administrative Assistant, Tonopah Field Station

U.S. Forest Service

Bob Vaught	Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
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Other Attendees

Emilyn Scheffield, Ph.D.	Keynote Speaker, Chair, Recreation and Parks Management, California State University, Chico
Skip Canfield	State of Nevada, Division of State Lands
Richard Hilton	President, Friends of Sand Mountain
Dan Peterson	Northern Regional Director, California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA)
Laurie Howard	National Wild Horse Association

Each attachment listed is on file with the official copy of the minutes in the BLM Nevada State Office. Persons desiring to view attachments should contact Debra Kolkman at (775) 289-1946.

Thursday, October 21

Welcome and Introductions

Bob Abbey, BLM Nevada State Director, called the meeting to order at 8:20 a.m. State Director Abbey welcomed all attending RAC members and visitors. He commented that the role played by RAC members is important and comes at the price of personal sacrifice to come to these meetings. He added that RACs have a great deal of influence in the planning and decision making for the management of 48 million acres of public lands in Nevada and that BLM looks forward to and appreciates that input.

State Director Abbey asked RAC members, BLM officials, and guests to introduce themselves.

State Director Abbey said that BLM Director Kathleen Clarke would join the meeting later in the afternoon to discuss current Congressional issues, but that during and immediately after lunch the RAC members would break out into their respective Pods (groups of members with similar interests) to discuss common issues and would present ideas to the whole group during the afternoon session.

State Director Abbey introduced Emilyn Sheffield, Ph.D.; Keynote Speaker; Chair, Recreation and Parks Management, California State University, Chico. State Director Abbey added, "The people are coming. The West is changing and BLM must be prepared to meet the challenge."

Emilyn Sheffield presentation: "Public Lands and the Changing West"

(A printed copy of this presentation is available upon request from the Nevada State Office, Office of Communications.)

Sheffield's message was that BLM must be prepared to face a changing West with many challenges and opportunities. She related the following facts and figures:

- Population of U.S. 200 years ago when the Corps of Discovery made its historic journey to the Pacific Ocean was 5.3 million; in 2000 it was 275 million; in 2050 it is estimated to be 571 million.
- We have not felt brunt of growth; it's still coming.
- The public point of view is that land agencies have become stewards of the lands.
- Agencies can no longer provide focused selections of information to the media, as the media will investigate further if not satisfied with the adequacy of information provided.
- There is increased public demand for recreation and open spaces.
- The role of the RACs is essential and will be seen as a major innovation in local and federal land management partnerships.
- After 100 years of making decisions that fine tuned earlier tone or theme setting decisions, we have returned to an era where tone setting decisions once again have to be made.
- Times of change provide opportunities to assess and report successes and results. This is what change is all about.
- Nine billion people will live on the Earth by 2050. Two components of this population change will be magnitude and composition.
- The current generation is the first raised largely by urbanites and is accustomed to rapid and relentless growth and change.
- Fifty-one percent of the changes occurring from 1995 to 2025 are not manageable.
- People are increasingly eager to seek housing in the rural West.
- There is no monolithic Western Frontier, but rather sprawling, destination, dwindling and vanishing frontiers.
- The segment of the population 65 and older will strain states.
- The last of the Baby Boomers turn 40 December 31. They are approaching retirement and becoming "zoomers."

- We are becoming members of a digital tribe and communities of interest with a global perspective. It is not longer about being the same color, but rather about “We are into the same thing.”
- If you don’t get it, your competition will.

Big challenge: Making the current generation realize the importance of natural areas. Kindergarten through 12th grade children are accelerating the rate of change.

- Hallmark makes cards for 150 different family relationships.
- Need to have a workforce and RACs whose diversity matches the U.S. population.
- Nevada is now one of the top ten states in percentage of Hispanics in its population.
- There will be more and more people at both ends of the lifespan (seniors and young people).
- There will be more and more new residents in the U.S. (i.e., births and immigration).

Demographics at a glance: The U.S. population is composed of diverse races, cultures, lifestyles, experiences, and activities and most are going outdoors. Recreation is about benefits and experiences. More and more users are wanting more and more opportunities, faster and faster, now!

- Need to establish corridors to direct and channel people, for example a Nevada outdoor recreation focus.
- People do not connect walking and trails in their minds. We must do that for them.
- Statistical estimates for the period 1995-2050 indicate an increase in outdoor recreation participants.
- Nature-based resources: If agencies throw money at this target, it will come back.
- A growing business will be recreational transportation.
- Wildlife viewing is a growing interest.
- Big fun is big business.
- A tourist is a recreationist 50 miles or more from home.
- Leisure travel is expected to grow by 50 percent by end of this decade.
- Technology expands access and opportunities. In the past 10 years internet users have increased from 16 million to 757 million. An unparalleled peacetime tech push, some of the effects include the posting of new job information in Nevada on the internet.
- Where human activity can occur on public lands, hotspots can develop.
- All systems are challenged by growth.

Advice to public land managers:

- It's important to set objectives for public lands.
- Public lands and resources are still as important to individuals today as they were years ago. Management should be mission driven, knowledge based and have strong motivational goals. Communities should also be utilized for volunteers and to encourage different points of view.
- Create connections: the known to the lesser known, unskilled to skilled, uncertain to confident, unaware to well-informed, and isolated to connected.
- Be a means to good ends: open spaces, cultural heritage, volunteerism, fitness, family fun, habitat, clean water, transportation, and air quality.

Closing remarks from Sheffield, "Thank you to the RACs for what you do. RACs provide a special link for BLM with the public with compassion and commitment."

Questions and Comments:

- Swanson said the role of fire is expensive as it relates to invasive species. Trying to conduct proactive management to protect nature is very expensive and will it be the public who pays the price.
- Sheffield said the public will not pay for it the way we currently present the equation. Government must get down to the Smokey Bear level. Wild horse and burro program must change its message connection. Giving names to projects such as the Great Basin Restoration Initiative illustrates a tactical approach for competing for resources.
- Eidel asked Sheffield how she would change the wild horse and burro program.
- Sheffield said Nevada is at ground zero for this effort. Ask yourselves what did Disney do? Disney did "Spirit."
- Hepworth commented that government must become a better marketer.
- Sheffield said straight business models are not sufficient for public land agencies to connect to their publics. Must raise the visibility of the public trust concept and connect management goals to them correctly. Forgetting about their politics and looking at other entities that have had success such as the Sierra Club. Reconnect urban people with the land and promote stewardship. RACs can help make this happen. 571 million hearts will be counting on BLM to provide navigation and direction.
- Eidel – What kind of investment in public education do you see as necessary?
- Sheffield said it's difficult to crack the current curriculum. Go for co-curriculums like who has students between school and home. Television, games, park & recreation units that are public partners are the largest contributor to after school programs. Work with Hollywood and those who control media channels to promote land stewardship. Keep picking away at public schools.

Amy Lueders Presentation: "2004 Accomplishments"

- Appropriate land disposals - First land sale was held in Elko this year.
- Planning – Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area RMP has been completed.
- Governor's sage-grouse plan and local planning efforts have made considerable progress.
- Wild Horse and Burro Program – Reprogrammed dollars are helping to gather 5,000 wild horses by the end of this year. The goal is to meet Appropriate Management Level by the end of 2006.

The BLM looked for partnerships to leverage money and accomplish goals. Over a dozen bills were introduced in Congress that directly affected Nevada such as the Lincoln County Lands Act bill. Geothermal will continue to be important as well as the increased interest in leasing and development, hardrock mining, outdoor recreation, planning, fuels and hazardous materials, and wildland urban interface projects. Ely has a Fuels-for-Schools program. RAC and public participation is vital in successfully addressing these issues.

Reg Reid Presentation: "Overview of the Energy and Minerals Program"

- Sixty-seven percent of geothermal leases in the U.S. are in Nevada.
- BLM Nevada has 25 non-competitive leases; 10 permits to drill.
- There are 170,000 households in Nevada that can benefit from geothermal energy.
- This year is the 50th anniversary of the discovery of oil in Nevada (1954-2004).

- BLM Nevada has 250,000 acres leased for oil and gas development that paid \$74 million in royalties this year that was split 50/50 with the state.
- 23,000 new claims were filed this year. Nevada holds over \$6 million in reclamation bonds, and is the world's third largest producer of gold.
- A NEPA review team is working closely with the state to improve the BLM Nevada permitting process.
- BLM is working to finalize a model that would standardize unit costs (visit www.nv.blm.gov to stay up to date).
- Nevada operates one of the largest Mineral Materials Programs in the BLM, which continues to offer materials such as sand and gravel free to counties for road programs.
- The Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Program in Nevada is one of the largest in the BLM and seeks to make public lands safe. BLM works cooperatively with the State of Nevada. Inventories have been made of over 500 sites and have been rated through a cooperative agreement with National Department of Transportation (NDOT). BLM is also working with Nevada Mining Association on site cleanups, bankruptcies, bat issues, etc. The BLM Hazardous Materials Program works closely with the minerals staff on AML sites. Desert dumping is also becoming a focus and BLM will work with federal, state and local agencies on such issues as how to dispose of large refrigerators, stoves, etc.

Questions and comments:

- Hutchings said it is important to try to reduce duplication in mine permitting as it relates to the NEPA process. There are some similar laws in surface management and plans of operation which could be improved. BLM could coordinate efforts with other agencies on inspections, bonding approvals and bonding amounts.
- State Director Abbey said that BLM realizes there are common goals and needs such as combining two forms into one. The one-stop shopping concept may not be possible with regard to regulations and statutes, but BLM is trying to streamline its processes wherever possible.
- Hepworth and Mudge agreed that BLM is making progress, but work still needs to be done.
- Eidel said that dead birds caused by improper claim markers [open-end PVC pipes] are on the radar.
- Reid explained that the state rules govern staking of mine sites.
- State Director Abbey said we must address such issues when they come to our attention.
- Eidel wanted a further look at AML issues.
- State Director Abbey said the BLM will continue to work on fixing the AML sites in cooperation with the state and industry.
- Hepworth said PVC plastic posts are easy to maintain and that there has been an effort to change the mining law to allow replacement of plastic mining posts to qualify as the \$100 annual claim fee.
- State Director Abbey said that BLM can make better progress to replace the PCV posts with wooden posts.
- Reid stated that Nevada has 119,000 active claims. The LR2000 computer program has every mining claim in the BLM system, which can be tracked and is accessible to the public. He added that every year we have a minerals workshop and discuss issues that are later posted on the BLM web site. BLM has also put on workshops concerning adjudication and other minerals topics.

- Phyllis Jo Dean asked how bat sites are marked at abandoned mine shafts and adits.
- Reid said that bat signing can be placed on fences or gates.
- State Director Abbey said that BLM does monitoring and mitigation on these sites.

Butch Hayes Presentation: "Overview of the Fire Program"

- There are now 10 SEATS (Single Engine Air Tankers) statewide. They will help fill in for the reduced number of large air tankers.
- Elko Field Office is spearheading the interagency fire management effort. Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD) are receiving donated engines based on BLM engine recycling. BLM provides \$20,000 to VFDs which is a different process than the Forest Service (FS) uses. For example, if the VFD gets a BLM engine it can own it, but the FS always retains ownership of its engines.
- 12,500 acres have been designated for sage-grouse habitat improvement and preservation this year. Monies are available for contract work in fuels, etc. The RACs can contact their local BLM Field Offices for contracting fund allocation information.
- Nevada Fire Safe Council is divided into a Nevada division and LakeTahoe Basin Division.
- Communities at Risk assessment is completed on a county-by-county basis and should be published by March 2005.

Questions and Comments:

- Falen mentioned the wildfire support group that responds to initial attacks. BLM has trained volunteer ranchers to act as their own Incident Command connected to dispatch communications. Hardly any fires have gotten away from the ranchers. Fuels management projects have evolved out of this support group effort and 3 ½ miles of water line have been installed so far by Falen and a neighbor.
- State Director Abbey said that fire suppression success often is dependent on volunteer support efforts including VFDs, especially for fires of 100 acres or less. He said BLM must tell this story better to help Congress better understand the importance of focusing on habitat protection from catastrophic wildfire, and that this would prove to Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) that BLM is protecting sage-grouse.
- Eidel asked what criteria BLM uses in determining the assignment of responsibility for fighting fires?
- Hayes said one important consideration is that the FS and BLM are not structure protection agencies; however, the BLM is learning about structure fires.
- State Director Abbey said there are lessons to be learned concerning how fuels reduction works in preventing and slowing wild fires. One-time funding must continue for maintaining fuel breaks.
- Eklund-Brown said it is good to have everybody at the table to work on conservation projects.
- Hayes said the BLM listens to its partners and that two issues are: public access on private property and private property on public lands.
- Swanson said restoring the natural role of fire, such as using prescribed fires should be looked at as well as fire use.
- Hayes said that approval has been given for 3 ½ million acres in Ely to be set aside for a fire use study, Elko is doing a prescribed burn on the Little Humboldt, and the BLM Nevada is working cooperatively with Monsanto, University of Reno-Nevada, and others to manage cheatgrass.

- State Director Abbey said that the FS has done a better job on fire use plans to date, but Ely is leading the charge on BLM fire use plans.
- Hayes emphasized the importance of maintaining fuel treatment areas.

Meg Jensen Presentation: "Overview of Resources, Lands and Planning"

There are four areas where RAC input can be helpful in identifying what Sheffield called trends for the future. (Briefing papers on each topic were provided to attendees.)

- Wind Energy – Because of a dramatic increase in the price of oil there will be more emphasis on wind energy. The BLM is involved in a National Wind Energy EIS and is hoping to expedite the application process. The comment period is open until 12/10/04. The RACs suggested Best Management Practices would be helpful to include in EIS planning, land-use in particular. The RACs could interface with the BLM at the land use planning level and in future planning and public use issues. It is important to identify key recreation trends over the next 20 years and to develop a framework for enabling current plans to address future trends. All projects should include public review and comment.
- Wilderness Planning is another big issue. Nevada is the number 3 state in the BLM in terms of areas designated as wilderness.
- OHV Use in Nevada is a big issue with BLM with 48 million public land acres to manage. It is important to identify OHV routes, trails, roads, etc. BLM has started inventorying OHV areas and now the state must step back and create a state plan including volunteers, funding, and partners. BLM is beginning an internal review and is looking for a large volunteer cadre to assist with the inventorying effort. The Nevada State Office is also hiring an OHV State Coordinator to be stationed in the Carson City Field Office.
- Sage Grouse has been a longtime BLM interest and involves conservation plans, listing, and habitat protection. Nevada has organized a large effort to create conservation plans and now has a game plan for about one-third of the area used by sage grouse. BLM is now looking for funding. Two-thirds of the conservation plans still need to be written. More volunteers are needed to assist and give a breather to those who have already been so involved.

Questions and Comments:

- Hepworth mentioned integrating technologies under one banner. Have we looked at satellite imagery for weed control?
- Jensen answered “yes” and said the Carson City Field Office is working on such an effort.
- Falen said he couldn't remember such a huge effort with so many people involved as the Governor's Sage-Grouse Committee and local efforts. He asked Jensen if she had a sense of how successful we may be in avoiding the listing of the sage grouse as threatened or endangered?
- Jensen said that is the million dollar question.
- State Director Abbey said he didn't know what the future would hold and probably neither did FWS, but there will be litigation to face no matter what. He said BLM must implement and focus its attention on completing plans and on implementing actions that can be accomplished today. He also pointed out that other species, such as the Pigmy rabbit, also benefit from the same habitat projects.

- State Director Abbey said that the purpose of this morning was to throw a lot of information at the RAC members. The BLM perspective has been presented but dialogue must work two ways. It is important to talk about real issues, not perceptions, and pursue common goals. The RACs must figure out how best to work together. Two-hundred-eighty million people own our public lands and a lot of stakeholders have an interest in what we are doing.
- Sheffield said the public looks to RAC members to help protect their interests. She said she appreciates the Secretary of the Interior's goal of asking the RACs to help BLM and emphasized that the focus must be on outcomes not output. Another value the RACs should keep in mind is that we must benefit those who will inherit today's resources; that is our legacy.

Discussion of Individual Pods (October 21, 2004)

Pod 1 – Commercial Uses:

1. Cultural Resource Clearances
 - Goes beyond cultural resources, includes documentation and redocumentation
 - Redundancy/perspective
 - Should be one application instead of several with several agencies
 - Consider existing conditions and uses
2. Consistency/potential solution
 - BLM internal appeals and review committee
 - BLM and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) could work together on reviews to reach consensus
3. Conflict Resolution
 - Seek avenues that are faster
4. Streamlining
5. Work on state-level EISs; develop model
6. BLM communicating information to other agencies, etc.
 - Make guidelines and regulations available to the RACs
 - Rule/regulation conformity
7. Personnel changes
 - Can cause rules to change
 - Inconsistencies between field offices, etc. (can be an advantage)
8. Solutions
 - Identify inconsistencies and communicate to upper management
 - Inform staff of regulations
 - Regulatory community needs venue for concerns as well as feedback
 - Important to have ways to get from 'A' to 'B'. Policies are valuable in this process (not just one way to do things).
9. Different goals among agencies
 - Intensity of application open to interpretation
10. Seek continuous improvement
11. Buck stops with Congress
12. RACs may want to provide BLM with suggested revisions to Invasive Species Act
13. Reaching Appropriate Management Level is half the job; managing wild horses is the next step
14. More public relations from commercial users to public may be needed to tell the story
15. Dewatering – Should not rob from one area to save another area
16. Stockwater development at property owner expense
17. Ranchers need tools to effectively manage livestock

18. Time involved in bond adjudication
 - Cannot get money back
 - Acknowledgement of 15 days
19. Concerns and questions about proposed routes to Yucca Mountain

Additional Comments:

- Eklund-Brown asked about wild horse and burro management.
- State Director Abbey responded that at one time there were 25,000 wild horses on public lands in Nevada; today there are 17,700. The AML is 14,500. This is as close as we have ever come to reaching AML. There will still be a certain amount of adverse affects on some permittees. Someone is going to have to go without and unfortunately it is easier to manage livestock than wild horses. In a few years, the health of the land will be restored and, looking towards the long-term, there will be enough forage for livestock and wild horses.
- Eklund-Brown noted that there is not enough funding to complete gathers and ranchers are facing tough restrictions.
- State Director Abbey stated that BLM Nevada is looking into options for easing the burden on ranchers and other entities. We are looking at projects to assist with the financial burdens facing ranchers due to lack of BLM funding to gather horses. One approach might be to ask ranchers to compete for range improvement contracts.
- Hutching stated that we seem to accept that these problems exist and cannot do anything about them. Seems to me there is a problem in communicating the BLM Nevada message to the national level. Is there an internal problem?

Pod 2 – Non-Commercial Uses:

1. Participate actively and early in Land Use Planning Processes statewide
2. Establishing, achieving and maintaining AML in HMAs statewide
3. More public involvement in analyzing impacts of wind energy; this is a major land use component
4. Bureaucratic road blocks – What is BLM doing to fund and implement the Sage-Grouse Plan to avoid a listing
5. Rural to urban transfers of water and ground water depletion
6. While streamlining the NEPA Process, maintain NEPA cultural resource goals and regulations while encouraging public and scientific interest and preserving traditional connections
7. Effective communication with the public land users (e.g., recreationists)
8. Make the volunteer program work by refining it
9. Better internal and external education about the threats of Invasive Species
10. Proactive interpretation of mining and other historic sites
11. Managing conflicting uses of the public lands; changing paradigm
12. Addressing demographic change

Additional Comments:

- RACs could become involved in formulating plans to move forward on recreation issues.
- Volunteers are important but difficult to organize and manage.
- There should be a proactive interpretation of Nevada's history, especially mining history and public roles.
- Eidel commented that an example of public perception is the "bird in tower" problem. The whole physical infrastructure is part of the problem because of what it takes to create wind energy equipment. He also said that to effectively evaluate an EIS, the RACs must be informed about affected topography.
- State Director Abbey stated that action to date is that the BLM has authorized testing.
- Reed suggested that perhaps BLM should look at *potential* areas for wind energy application.
- Morse commented that Las Vegas completed a Draft EIS on wind energy potential and never received any applications.
- Kolkman commented that there is concern that BLM will receive 100 applications. A company may base its decision to move forward on the perception that everything could be mitigated.
- Morse said Las Vegas is concerned about the impacts from wind towers themselves as they relate to infrastructure and location.
- Hiatt ask if there is a way to look at alternative sites to construct wind energy equipment?
- State Director Abbey replied that the BLM can make available potential wind energy sites. Wind energy and other alternative energy sources are coming and it is important to keep people informed.
- Roullier stated that any interconnection to another system that is critical to operation must be considered up front.
- Mudge commented that he was concerned about the lack of public dialogue on wind power. The RACs should make an attempt to inform their publics.
- State Director Abbey replied that Nevada State Statute requires wind energy applications be made by a certain date. This requirement, plus rising gas prices, will encourage the pursuit of wind energy applications.
- Agee asked about environmental concerns.
- State Director Abbey replied that geothermal development concerns water pumping and development and impact on resources. The BLM is expecting a rising interest from the energy community.
- Kolkman stated there is concern about it (alternative energy) being a platform for litigation from environmental entities.
- Hiatt stated that rural to urban water transfers are a big issue and the RACs should look at this closely.
- Eidel asked where the money will come from to do projects other than fire in FY2005? He expressed concern about the NEPA process.
- State Director Abbey replied that timeliness of addressing actions on the ground is an important issue. The BLM is looking to address many of the ecosystem modifications as part of land use plans.
- Jensen stated it is hard to respond to the funding issue because the BLM budget is still in negotiations right now.
- State Director Abbey informed the RACs that Director Clarke would address funding concerns and topics such as sage-grouse, etc., later today.

Pod 3 – All Other Categories:

1. Economic development should be a higher priority (stable community economic development should have greater emphasis)
 - a) Streamlining/Coordination
 - ❖ Maintain Focus
 - ❖ Mining Permits – Difficulty with staffing
 - ❖ Coordination with Tribes
 - ❖ Specialist with dual duties (e.g., Range Conservationists with Fire Rehab duties)
 - b) Is fuel reduction being implemented to conform with RAC Vegetation Management and OHV Guidelines
 - ❖ Can this be done in RMP Amendments rather than waiting for new RMPs to be completed
 - ❖ Is OHV/Vegetation Management a high enough priority
 - c) Realty Actions among Field Offices Should Be Uniform
 - d) There may be benefits to realigning BLM districts to county lines
2. State should aim to eradicate weeds in individual watersheds
 - ❖ Has this been done
 - ❖ Are alternative funding mechanisms available
3. Is BLM positioning itself in relation to the burgeoning population
 - ❖ Is BLM developing the constituencies it needs to do this (e.g., creating a wildlife and wild horse and burro viewing strategy)
4. Wild horses need to be tied to the ecological health of the rangeland
 - ❖ All views must be considered, with caution
5. Fires or fire surrogates need to be reestablished
6. Land Use Planning should be proactive/anticipatory rather than reactive/crisis management driven
 - Limits must be placed on acceptable change
7. How can the ideas presented today (and at meetings like this) be put into effect
8. Recreation in the broadest sense is coming to Nevada from California
 - ❖ California growth and demographics must be considered in BLM planning efforts.
 - ❖ How can we place necessary limits on uses by visitors to Nevada
 - ❖ Local Governments and Tribes must be involved in the process
9. Should truth in advertising be practiced in our statements about lands and resources
10. Fugitive dust from OHV Use is a growing concern
11. Volunteers should be utilized as much as possible
12. Multi-Agency/Multi-Interests Planning is the way to go
(Consensus → Education → Action)

Additional Comments:

- Swanson asked whether amendments could be made to current RMPs or must new RMPs be developed? Another concern is uniformity for realty actions among field offices. Could there be a liaison among county governments and the BLM? What about alternative funding mechanisms and developing constituencies to support BLM work? On the wild horse and burro topic, could the wild horse be used as an icon for healthy rangelands? Good idea to emphasize volunteer participation for education and managing lands. There should be an interdisciplinary planning process from the beginning.

- Garcia noted that unfortunately, BLM staff specialists often become fire personnel during fire season. Staff needs to focus on issues they were hired for and understand that Nevada is a multiple use state.
- Hiatt expressed concern about out-of-state brochure messages such as *OHV Extreme Use*. That image is difficult to counteract later on.
- Eklund-Brown asked what should be inserted in brochures?
- Hiatt replied the fragility of the land is precious and trashing it is not enjoying it.
- Trippet asked what about billboard displays?
- Hiatt commented that good land use should be the focus of a whole advertising campaign.
- Agee suggested the message might be “Learn before you play.” Recreationists should develop a cautionary personal responsibility.
- Hiatt asked if there is any opportunity for the BLM to review the Nevada State Tourist Bureau (publication) efforts?
- Simpson replied that the BLM Communications team does a review for geographic accuracy but not on outreach messages.
- State Director Abbey stated that BLM did communicate two of the Director’s 4Cs messages to the Tourist Bureau. *Tread Lightly* is a good program message and we should take advantage of this theme in our outreach efforts. We also need to incorporate in our messages that *Leave No Trace* does not take away from public use.

Public Comment Period:

- Dan Peterson – Northern Regional Director, California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA). Expressed thanks for BLM/RAC interest in OHV issues. Important that we understand how to build relationships between the right and left hands of communities.
- State Director Abbey said the BLM is trying diligently to progress towards reasonable solutions and is sensitive to those issues. Also, thinking outside the box is appropriate to this topic.
- Vogler said there is enough blame (regarding horse gathers) to go around. Gathers have been stopped by environmental groups. He is tickled the BLM is making progress. The process does take time.
- Hutching said the wild horse and burro program is unable to respond on a timely basis.
- Hepworth said that Director Clarke has been working very hard for additional funding from Congress. It is a long-term process. The RACs have been working on the wild horse issue since 1995. Other program costs have been affected as well.

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke Presentation: "Overview of BLM at the National Level"

Introduction:

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke said it was a privilege to be here and she would present an overview of BLM at the national level. Prior to arriving, she reviewed the pages provided by the Nevada State Office, Office of Communications on each individual RAC member and was astounded at the level of expertise and accomplishment of all RAC members. Director Clarke stated, “You bring a lot of passion about public lands. Faith, family and being out on public lands are important.”

You share a particular connection to public lands as well as supporting rural economies and valuing the beauty of public lands such as wilderness areas. For a little while you check out (no cell service) and enjoy peacefulness. People no longer have to be tied to urban centers. Today, companies can relocate to rural areas without moving entire staffs. The world is moving so fast. We appreciate the contributions you make and in the amount of time you volunteer to attend these meetings.

The BLM manages 262 million acres of land surface which is a lot for a relatively small agency, as well as 700 million acres of sub-surface minerals. BLM is appropriated \$1.7 billion; however, \$.7 billion is pass through money going to fire, etc., which leaves an operating budget of about \$1 billion for BLM. This is about \$3.30 per acre per year. We are facing tremendous challenges and could not meet them effectively without your help and that of our partners. A person is measured by what he chooses to do with his time and money. We know that you could do many other things with your free time, but you are here because you care.

The President's Challenges:

- ***To make a difference*** – Determine what you want to contribute your time, knowledge and resources to, and decide if you have reached those goals before passing the baton.
- ***Results*** – Government is bound in bureaucratic processes, rules and regulations of which there are an astounding number. There are 70 different directives in place just focusing on invasive species. It is important to make a difference on the ground. Rules and regulations serve us--not the other way around. We seek to bring clarity and, where appropriate, simplicity to these processes so we can devote more time to doing on-the-ground work. Process is important, but we need to make sure that the process serves us. If you see that processes are not working, let us know. Sometimes we become so accustomed to stuff that we don't pay attention. Fresh eyes are needed.
- ***Remember who is in charge*** – The millions of people in the U.S. are your boss and this is particularly true of the public lands. Public lands are open and accessible and people love the BLM.

BLM's Priorities:

- ***Acknowledge that we are a multiple use agency.*** Public lands must be healthy and productive to support these uses. We must be good land stewards. When we fail at this task, the courts get involved and we lose our ability to direct management.
- ***Promote and build partnerships (cooperative partnerships).*** The BLM does not have enough staff to do the job. Director Clarke told about an Oregon community that got together and volunteered their time to clean up a dump area in one day on BLM-administered land even though the BLM did not have staff or funding for this small area. A young person later drove his truck into the cleaned area and the community was outraged and made him clean it up. Director Clarke said this needs to happen on all public lands.
- ***Public land use is exploding.*** We must be prepared to manage it.
- ***An aggressive conservation effort is necessary to keep sage grouse from being listed.*** Monitoring money is needed and we are looking for additional monies.
- ***Multiple use should not become multiple abuse.***
- ***Monies to focus on communities at risk and fire management issues.*** This is a high priority issue.

- ***We are hoping for a small increase to our energy program.*** Americans rely on energy as does our quality of life. The costs are challenging and BLM has a responsibility to address them. One-third of the nation's energy supply comes from public lands.
- ***Forestry and woodlands programs need to be rebuilt.***
- ***Existing budget cannot address wild horse and burro problems.*** The audit has been done on the wild horse and burro program, and there is no way, with the existing budget, to address the problems. Seventeen million dollars out of \$29 million is needed to house and feed horses during their natural lives. Wild horses live longer in long-term holding facilities. The adoption rate is not keeping up with gather schedules. It is a no win situation which led us to look at program efficiency with our wild horse and burro advisory groups, Bob Abbey, and the Wild Horse and Burro Foundation. This brought us to the conclusion that we needed about \$12 million more for this program. The next step meant going to the Secretary of the Interior for more money. The President is looking at \$10 million in reprogramming from other departments. We looked at many options but this was the only way to handle other national priorities as well. We are lean and mean as it is. An omnibus bill is coming and we hope to get language that supports reprogramming of money.
- I am optimistic about the future because people like you care so much and are an inspiration to others.

Questions and Comments:

- Eklund-Brown asked if mandates keep BLM from making progress?
- Director Clarke answered yes, and Congress needs to understand that if BLM is mandated to do a job, then adequate funds are needed.
- Eklund-Brown asked if BLM was aware of the Shoshone proposal to establish them as a business to manage wild horse herds?
- Director Clarke replied, "Aware of this? Yes, we are aggressively looking at options and welcome all your good ideas. There is a budget for monitoring wild horses which is a consistent need. Development needs to be done on a national strategy that will enable field offices to monitor districts."
- Garcia asked if this should be a priority for the RACs?
- Director Clarke answered yes. The BLM would appreciate the RACs' wisdom and input after we provide a draft.
- Hepworth commented that the spirit of rural folks is independent and that is part of Western history. Do you see us as facing issues without so many regulations?
- Director Clarke noted that the BLM and DOI participate with other groups, but ask these groups to set up meetings and then the BLM attends and provides information. These groups do not have decision-making authority. We have polarized communities that need to be brought together like the RACs.

For instance, litigation groups. Confront litigation in a positive way so we might be able to expand the groups we work with. If the BLM has a local presence, the judge is less likely to rule against us. There is power in shared stewardship. Local interest groups are a great source of information.

BLM manages 50 percent of remaining sage-grouse habitat. Folks have been directed to establish a national policy. When this was sent out for feedback, there were many nasty comments sent back, so some things changed. A listening session was held in Oregon. After returning to the WO, it was decided to visit other states for additional input. Every state with a sage-grouse population was covered. When the group got back together, they totally rewrote the document and wrote the sage-grouse

strategy based on the importance of keeping local sage-grouse conservation efforts moving.

The best way for me to make decisions is by listening to all of you. Washington DC is 10-square miles surrounded by reality. What do you want us to know? These RACs are a filtering system to provide information so that BLM can make decisions that work.

- Eklund-Brown asked if there can be any Wilderness Study Area (WSA) resolutions without going through a lands bill?
- Director Clarke replied no. I don't see Congress wanting to take this on. If you have a committee delegation willing to do it, a lands bill is the best way to present it to Congress. There are two sides of the fence: those that don't understand restrictions that come with wilderness designation; and those that support WSAs and are passionate about them. This issue was first brought to Congress 12 years ago and Congress has not acted.
- Hiatt commented on the issue of the Great Basin Restoration Initiative. Nevada is a large state land wise, but not in population. Even with new people moving in we cannot fund restoration on our own. How can we make Congress listen?
- Director Clarke replied that Congress listens to constituents. The BLM has not had people going to Congress or lobbying for its programs. Congress created foundations for the FWS and the National Park System. When I first came into office I tried to establish a BLM foundation, but was told that the FWS foundation was for BLM also. However, Congress is not getting the message to expand the budget for BLM. We will be looking for ways to build a more effective constituent base. No RAC can take the initiative on lobbying, but you do have senators committed to this state.
- Dicks asked what do you see as the role of volunteer programs in the future of BLM?
- Director Clarke stated that she expects commitment to volunteerism and have showcased the Golden Gate Park as an example of volunteers making a difference. The park manager decided to make every one of his staff a volunteer trainer and in so doing, has turned the park around. The only limit on what can be accomplished with volunteers is our lack of vision. The President started the Freedom Corps idea and challenged every citizen to give two years' of volunteer time to public lands. Gale Norton (Secretary of the Interior) is using the Take Pride in America concept to support the volunteer ethic. Government is trying to recruit volunteers not only to expand its capacity for work but also to establish a feeling of stewardship. We need the help of RAC members such as you who so willingly give their time to help preserve America's public lands. We will see volunteerism growing in the future.
- Director Clarke commended State Director Abbey on his vision and commitment to Nevada as well as his wisdom and common sense. "My hat is off to Bob's team." She added that she always feels that coming to Nevada is like coming home.
- State Director Abbey then spoke to the RAC members, "We appreciate your contributions and patience, dialogue and participation in this Tri-RAC meeting." He then added that he was unhappy to hear that some of the same issues are still presenting concerns, such as a lack of consistency. He thought progress had been made but it seems BLM Nevada still has a long way to go.

State Director Abbey adjourned the meeting for the day at 4:55 p.m.

Friday, October 22

7:30 a.m. to Noon – Each RAC met separately to elect new officers, prioritize issues and decide on meeting dates for 2005.

Noon – All RACs met as a group to give status reports.

RAC Reports

Northeastern Great Basin RAC Report:

Presented by Vince Garcia

- Officers for 2005: Chair, Vince Garcia; Vice-Chair, Hank Vogler
- Northeastern RAC asked that updates be provided at every meeting on issues such as wild horses and burros, and mining.
- Next meeting - January 28, 2005. Northeastern RAC will be meeting the same time as the Sierra-Front RAC in Carson City. This RAC is interested in some of the same information concerning transfer of water from rural Nevada to Las Vegas. Struble will see if the speakers can give the same presentation to both RACs.
- Eidel asked State Director Abbey to entertain the idea of sharing a water speaker. Coordination is needed between the two RACs.
- 2005 Priorities and Action Items:
 - Land sales and acquisition
 - Transportation planning
 - Restoration/sage grouse
 - Ely RMP
 - Health of the land – The Battle Mountain Field Office needs the RAC's advice on Carico Lake Allotment which is similar to the advice given to Elko Field Office for South Buckhorn Allotment (Danns).
 - Information presentations for 2005 RAC meetings will focus on water planning and alternative energy sources.
- Meeting and Tour Dates 2005:
 - January 28, Friday in Reno - Meeting will begin at 8:00 am. Items for discussion will be Ely RMP, water presentation and update on Governor's Sage-Grouse Plan (to include an overview and listing status), discussion of Field Offices' plans for Population Management Units. Meeting will be held at the Nevada State Office conference room or John Ascuaga's Nugget.
 - March 31, Thursday in Eureka - This meeting will include a tour of Wildland Urban Interface projects in the Battle Mountain district for fuel reduction and pinyon-juniper manipulation. The rest of the meeting will include an alternate energy presentation, sage-grouse restoration and an update on the Ely RMP.
 - May 20, Friday in Elko – Present Elko district's land sale map and further discuss land sales and transportation planning (OHV) with cultural resources and realty staffs.
 - Discussion of Battle Mountain's Land Use Planning revisions.
 - July 14-15, Thursday and Friday at Battle Mountain Field Office – Tour and meeting. Discuss rangeland health issues and streamlining NEPA process.
 - Invited to the Eastern Landscape Coalition meeting and tour which will be held June 17-18. All Nevada RACs are always invited to plan a meeting in Ely to coincide with the Coalition meeting.

Sierra Front-Northwest Great Basin RAC Report:

Presented by Bill Roullier

- Officers for 2005: Chair; Bill Roullier; Vice-Chair, Larie Trippet

- Accomplishments for 2004 included 4 meetings—one which was a joint meeting with the western California RAC in April. Sand Mountain Recreation Area was discussed as well as the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails NCA.
- At the July meeting, Sand Mountain Recreation Area was again discussed and included a presentation by Friends of Sand Mountain and a BLM tour of Lovelock Cave and Coeur Rochester.
- Meetings for 2005 –January 27-28 (joint meeting with Northeastern Great Basin RAC on the 28th—water issues), April 28-29 in Winnemucca, and in July.
- Topics for 2005 will include :
 - Alternative energy, a coal-powered plant near Gerlach, wind energy
 - Sage-grouse rehabilitation and planning
 - Updates on RMP Amendments in the Carson City district (e.g., Pine Nut Plan, Churchill County and Carson City Consolidated RMP (whether to dispose of smaller parcels).
 - Demographics
 - Native American consultation presentation
 - Wild Horse and Burro Guidelines
 - Discussion of possible continuation of OHV problems
 - April meeting – Scoping for Winnemucca RMP

Mohave Southern Great Basin RAC Report:

Presented by John Hiatt

- Officers for 2005: Chair, Steve Mellington; Vice-Chair, John Hiatt
- Accomplishments for 2004 were updates on EISs and planning for Ely and Las Vegas. Recommendations were made for expenditure of funds to come out of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act monies to create a desert learning center. Also discussed were restoration and other problems in the Ely district.
- Meeting dates for 2005:
 - January 20-21 in Las Vegas
 - April 14-15 in Caliente
 - June 16 in Ely
 - August 11-12 in Tonopah
- Topics for 2005 include:
 - Las Vegas- rural to urban transfer of water
 - Demographics – OHV, user conflicts, volunteer issues
 - Ely Planning process, preliminary EIS for Sloan Canyon; Las Vegas disposal boundary EIS (may need to be done individually)
 - Ecosystem health to focus on sage grouse and elk
 - Usual issues of grazing, mining etc.

Wrap-Up:

State Director Abbey noted that 6 ½ years ago BLM Nevada put together a “BLM Vision.” We must remember that silence has value, public lands need to be free of trash, that lands matter and communities need to be healthy and safe.

Additional Comments by State Director Abbey:

- Today’s generation does not seem to have a strong connection to its public lands and we must work to improve that link. I routinely share this because I believe in it.
- People move to Nevada for jobs, good paying jobs; others enjoy the quality of life in Nevada. The State **will not** control growth and **will** put demands on public lands for

- activities such as recreation. Nevada's elected officials will need to look at smart growth (Governor of Colorado statement) in a sustainable manner. We must come together to manage public lands regardless of agency boundaries while acknowledging our differences in a constructive and positive manner.
- Nevada has a chance to lead and this was the challenge presented by Dr. Sheffield. Other states like California will be looking to Nevada to lead, and I believe we are up to the challenge.
 - We need to be proactive managers. Land Use Plans should be designed to look at 10-15 years out. BLM Nevada needs to work and plan smarter.
 - As Nevada citizens you should demand from your legislators that they legislate to ensure growth pays for itself.
 - We must work closely at local and state levels to keep the public informed during our planning processes.
 - Local officials must ensure that public access to public lands is maintained.
 - State Director Abbey is hopeful there is a strong passion for public lands at the local level.
 - This is an important state legislative year and water will be a big issue. Sadly, I am usually the only person who testifies before the State legislature who speaks for public lands and resources. And I'm usually followed by people who question the federal government's authority to manage public lands in the first place. More voices speaking for our public lands would give a stronger message.
 - Your challenge as RAC members is to be a voice for public resources. Legislators need to hear that voice.
 - Capacity is a challenge we have as a public land agency. More and more of our priorities are being established at the national level. We used to have more funds to deal with local issues and more flexibility. We will see new mandates and changes in priorities and BLM will need to respond to national issues as well as to local issues. Our staff is maxed out. We still need to try to improve our efficiencies and reach out to others to help us meet our demands (volunteers, contractors, etc.) without whining or complaining. We are up to the challenge to lead but need your (RAC) help. We must move forward and prioritize.
 - Hearing the same complaints and concerns voiced at this meeting as in prior meetings makes me question if progress is being made. While there are no overnight changes, I will be somewhat satisfied as long as we keep moving forward to address the new issues that are constantly coming before us. Vision will drive future decisions and some decisions are outside of our control.
 - I constantly remind others that BLM does not issue water rights but it has appealed many water rights decisions that would export water out of Nevada. For the White Pine to Clark County pipeline proposal and Lincoln County Lands Act utility corridor, the BLM will conduct a very public process to analyze impacts, identify concerns and issues that should be focused on as well as preparing an EIS. Most likely a Record of Decision (ROD) will authorize the pipeline and will identify impacts to public lands. It will be important to study mitigation efforts and we can expect proponents to mitigate. There will be a need to use existing information for the ROD as well as adaptive management and to understand the roles of state and federal governments and where you as a RAC member can engage in dialogue.
 - Revenue generated from land sales is something the BLM Nevada has that no other state has. Land sale dollars are expected to exceed \$1 billion for primary use in Clark County.

- It will be important to look at the water recharge rate after water is pumped from aquifers. Maybe we can find a way to increase water sources. The Southern Nevada Water Authority would be required to pay for restoration as it relates to watersheds. The Southern Nevada Water Authority receives 10 percent of the land sales revenues so they would have funds to restore watersheds. Nevada is impacted by population growth and none of us imagined this rate of growth when earlier legislation was passed.
- Unless Congress is willing to pay through appropriations, the tasks we are demanded to meet due to growth will require the BLM to be very creative. Land sales dollars were never meant to supplement appropriation dollars. Congress must be educated to learn that land sales dollars are needed to augment appropriation dollars.
- BLM senior expertise staff is retiring and there will be a transition period. Hopefully, the best and brightest are being hired to replace those who are leaving. A new generation of employees will take their place. Many will not have been raised on a ranch, or worked in mining, etc. We need you as stakeholders to let us know when you see a problem or “train wreck” and to let us know that we need to change direction.
- OHV use is one area of continuing growth and also involves rights-of-way.
- While protecting resources and traditional values, we must also accommodate growth. This starts with early communication such as in the scoping process.
- The future is now and it is time to quit debating about who changed what, but rather how best to manage the land. The BLM will strive to continue to ensure public access, a supply of wildlife forage and availability of commodities. We need your help to carry out our tasks.
- Trippet asked about the upcoming Nevada State Legislative Session. Is someone on the BLM staff paying attention to bills? Could the Public Affairs staff let the RACs know when hearings are scheduled, etc., as well as notifying us about upcoming bills, etc.?
- Falen commented, when State Director Abbey mentioned going before the State legislature, the Nevada Cattlemen’s Association would be willing to support his presence. We would also like to compliment Bob on his forward looking vision.
- Hepworth said, we appreciate Bob Abbey’s vision and progress HAS been made. Current processes must be changed to accommodate future growth. Being reactionary is not good, we all need to be proactive.
- Roullier said Sierra Pacific Power Company cannot use small staffs as an excuse to not do the work. Contractors are used to supplement staff. When RMPs are being created in Nevada, it would be good if power companies, etc., could get in on the ground floor.
- Dicks said, some of us are close enough to support you in the Legislature, adding that a greater role for volunteers is needed to help out your staff.
- Gebhardt said that a greater degree of interaction is needed between RACs on position taking, etc., and on decisions being made.
- State Director Abbey invited RAC Chairs to attend quarterly State Leadership Team Meetings in an effort to keep the dialogue going. The first meeting for FY2005 is November 3-4 in the Battle Mountain Field Office.
- Craig Young asked if the approved minutes from each RAC’s meetings could be sent to other RACs?
- Eidel said hydrographic basins should be considered, where water could be pumped back into the basin. RAC groups could investigate ways to help small communities. The Southern Nevada Water Authority has a group that looks at water disposal and

reuse. We could also look at rainfall as a possibility that could solve flood problems while refilling basins.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Jon Hutching moved to adjourn the meeting and Bill Roullier seconded. The motion was carried.

State Director Abbey adjourned the meeting at 12:25 p.m.

Minutes Approved by:

/s/Bob Abbey, State Director, Nevada

December 23, 2004

Minutes were provided by Diane Hendry, Public Affairs Specialist, Battle Mountain Field Office, and Jamie Thompson, Public Affairs Officer, Winnemucca Field Office.

Attachments

1. Welcome . . . BLM Fiscal Year 2005 Outlook (hard copy of PowerPoint presentation)
2. BLM Nevada Legacy Plan PowerPoint presentation
3. Emilyn Sheffield "Public Lands-Changing World...Changing West" (hard copy of PowerPoint presentation)
4. Nevada Resource Advisory Council FY2004 Accomplishments and Successes
5. Nevada Resource Advisory Councils FY2005 membership rosters.
6. Memorandum of Understanding for Water Quality Management Activities within the State of Nevada between Nevada Department of Conservation, Division of Environmental Protection and U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management; September 2004
7. Briefing Papers used in Meg Jensen's presentation:
 - Wind Energy
 - Land Use Planning
 - Sage Grouse
 - OHV Strategy
8. Publications in folders handed out to each RAC member:
 - *Adopting a Wild Horse or Burro from an Adoption Facility*
 - *Don't Let History Burn!*
 - *Your Public Lands in Nevada*
 - *Map & Visitor Guide: Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area*
 - *Public Rewards from Public Lands 2003*
 - *American Energy for America's Future*
 - *Nevada Sage* (Summer 2004)

For further information or copies of attachments, please contact Debra Kolkman, BLM Nevada State RAC Coordinator, 775-289-1946, or Debra_Kolkman@nv.blm.gov.